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CARDIN DETAILS PLANS TO SECURE FUNDING FOR HARRIET TUBMAN PARK VISITORS CENTER

Senator Has Introduced Bill to Create National Park to Honor Harriet Tubman

CAMBRIDGE, MD -- **U.S. Senator Benjamin L. Cardin (D-MD)** today joined with Kristin Saunders, Assistant Secretary Land Resources for the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, at a press conference to discuss the Senator's recent legislative proposal to create the *Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad National Historical Park*. He also discussed plans to secure federal and state funding for a future Visitors Center.

In July, **Senators Cardin** and **Barbara A. Mikulski** (D-MD) introduced *The Harriet Tubman National Historical Park* and *The Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad National Historical Park Act*, which would establish two parks, one in Maryland and one in New York, to honor the life of Harriet Tubman. The National Historical Park in Maryland will trace Tubman's early life on the Eastern Shore of Maryland, where she was born and later escaped from slavery to become one of the leaders on the Underground Railroad. The National Historical Park in New York will focus on her later years in Auburn where she was active in the suffrage movement and in providing for the welfare of aged African Americans.

The bill authorizes up to $11 million in grants that can be used for construction of the Harriet Tubman State Park Visitors Center in Maryland and for easements or acquisitions of property inside or adjacent to the Historical Park boundaries. Senators Cardin and Mikulski have secured preliminary approval of $500,000 in next year's federal budget that can be used to begin design and preliminary engineering of the new Visitors Center. **Governor Martin O'Malley** has committed $1.6 million in his FY 2009 budget to finance the center's design, which will serve as a national model and destination for sustainable and environmentally sensitive building. Maryland will select the architectural team to design the visionary center next month.

 "Harriet Tubman was a true American patriot, for whom liberty and freedom were not just concepts," said **Senator Cardin**. "She lived those principles and shared that freedom with hundreds of others. These two parks will make it possible for Marylanders and the entire nation to trace her life's work and remember all that she was able to accomplish."

"Harriet Tubman was a courageous fighter who delivered 300 slaves to freedom on her Underground Railroad and was tireless in her commitment to fight for those who could not fight themselves. Her life continues to inspire me," said **Senator Mikulski**. "That's why I am proud to fight for legislation that will honor, preserve and protect her legacy."

"The new Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad State Park Visitor's Center will provide a long overdue, permanent tribute and gateway into the life of the Maryland-born American

patriot whose courage, leadership, and legacy serve today as a model for us all," said **Governor O'Malley**. "Thanks to the efforts of Senators Cardin and Mikulski, our partnership with the federal government will greatly enhance Maryland's efforts to help people of all walks of life appreciate and explore Harriet Tubman's historic journey."

"This partnership honors a great American hero and engages all Americans in conservation," said **Charles Jordan**, board member and former chairman of The Conservation Fund. "We commend Senators Cardin and Mikulski and Governor O'Malley for their commitment to protecting Maryland's eastern shore for current and future generations."

"Today is a day that Harriet Tubman would be so thankful for – that her work and humanitarian struggles and social achievements are part of American history. Her life story is a history lesson in itself by encouraging ordinary people to do extraordinary things and overcome social injustices no matter how great the risk," said **Donald Pinder,** President of the Harriet Tubman Organization.

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